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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3285
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003503

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S JUNE 21 MEETING WITH THAI POLICE
CHIEF SEREEPISUTH

REF: A. BANGKOK 03402 (DOUBLE SECRET LEGISLATION: THAI
SECURITY ACT PENDING?)
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 03378 (SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: NEW VIOLENCE
STATISTICS MORE DEADLY AMBUSHES)
[1](#)C. 06 BANGKOK 07501 (THE NEW PUSH FOR THAI POLICE
REFORM)

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. Reason 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In a meeting with the Ambassador on June 21, National Police Commissioner Sereepisuth acknowledged the difficulty of the southern situation, dismissed radical reform ideas for the police and judged anti-government protests as "finished." Sereepisuth welcomed new bilateral training initiatives, but did not propose any specific areas to focus on. The Ambassador explained the decision to place Thailand on the Special 301 Priority Watch List and urged Sereepisuth to continue new efforts to crack down on both producers and retailers of pirated goods. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador hosted a lunch meeting with National Police Commissioner Sereepisuth Taeneeyaves on June 21 to discuss a range of issues. Sereepisuth, who took the top cop job in January, was accompanied by his Foreign Affairs Chief, MAJ GEN Visanu Prasattongsoth.

SOUTH

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador asked Sereepisuth for his view of the situation in the troubled South. Sereepisuth admitted that the task facing the police in the South is very difficult, but said that the RTG understands the challenges at hand. In Sereepisuth's opinion, the RTG must focus on implementing the conciliatory policy of the Surayud government while improving administration of the southern provinces. This will lead to a gradual improvement in the situation. Sereepisuth referenced the importance of using tactics honed during the anti-communist campaigns of the 1970s against the insurgents, but noted that local commanders were too young to remember the lessons of that era.

[1](#)4. (C) For the police, Sereepisuth said that success will depend on effective follow through on individual cases. Local cops need strong leadership and willpower to run down every case, from the investigation to the prosecution phase.

He pointed to the recent arrest of eight alleged bomb makers allegedly responsible for the May Hat Yai bombings as a successful example of this approach. Sereepisuth acknowledged that increasingly effective ambushes of security officials (ref B) are a major challenge to police morale but hoped that new efforts to install closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) in that region will lead to more arrests and prosecutions.

RALLIES IN BANGKOK

15. (C) The Ambassador noted the careful restraint of police officials in their response to recent rallies. Sereepisuth characterized the anti-government protests in Bangkok as "finished." While heavy rains had led to lower attendance, this just proved that the protesters were not "true believers" and that opponents of the government could not organize enough people.

POLICE REFORM/ISOC

16. (C) When asked about police reform efforts (ref C), Sereepisuth dismissed radical plans to restructure his forces. The individual in charge of the efforts is a retired police official who "doesn't understand the police." (Comment: Sereepisuth was referring to Vasit Dejkunchorn, a highly regarded retired senior police officer who was hand-picked by PM Surayud to oversee police reform. He has a reputation as brilliant and uncorruptable. Sereepisuth said Vasit, who has published many books and writes a newspaper column, had his "head in the clouds" whereas he, Sereepisuth,

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had his "feet on the ground.") Sereepisuth pointed at his own, long rise through the police ranks as providing the type of expertise needed to address this issue. He was particularly dismissive of suggestions that the police be broken up into local forces administered by individual provinces. "What happens if criminals leave one province and move to another?" Sereepisuth also referenced his efforts as the top cop in Chonburi province against a notorious mob boss, suggesting that decentralized police commands could be seduced by local crime figures. Sereepisuth denied having specific knowledge of the draft Internal Security Act, which appears to provide the military--via the Internal Operations Security Command (ISOC)--with a host of law enforcement powers. (Note: MAJ GEN Visanu told us separately that top police officials are concerned with the draft law and "trying to understand it." End Note.)

BILATERAL TRAINING

17. (C) Sereepisuth acknowledged the long history of U.S.-Thai bilateral law enforcement training programs. The Ambassador highlighted the coming visit of an INL team to explore new areas for cooperation. Sereepisuth welcomed new initiatives, but did not specify areas to focus on (Note: We are following up with Sereepisuth's staff on this issue. End Note.)

BANGKOK BOMB INVESTIGATION

18. (C) The Ambassador noted the apparent lack of progress in the investigation of eight bomb attacks in Bangkok on New Year's Eve 2006. Sereepisuth explained that the police had CCTV footage of suspects at several of the blast sites that provided potential leads, but investigators had not yet identified the suspects in that footage.

IPR

19. (SBU) Turning to intellectual property rights (IPR) issues, the Ambassador explained that USTR's recent decision to place Thailand on the Special 301 Priority Watch List was the result of concerns over an apparent laxity in Thai enforcement on this issue. The Ambassador noted Sereepisuth's personal involvement in a raid in April and congratulated him on the June 20 raid on an optical disk plant. The Ambassador encouraged Sereepisuth to keep after not only retailers, but also the producers of pirated and counterfeit goods. Sereepisuth highlighted the recent raid as an example of how his forces are cracking down on manufacturers; two producers were among those arrested on June 20.

BOYCE